

Executive Director
Position Description | August 25, 2008

LAWRENCE ARTS CENTER



Located in downtown Lawrence, the Lawrence Arts Center is a hub of arts activities and information in Lawrence. The Center's gallery showcases the work of area and nationally known artists, and the Center offers community classes, workshops and performance opportunities for all ages in art, drama, dance, writing and more. The Center publishes *The Arts in Action*, a magazine about the arts in the community, and presents events and performances in partnership with the Lawrence community.

Lawrence: The Art of a City

- Lawrence is listed 15th in John Villani's *The 100 Best Small Art Towns in America*.
- Outdoor sculptures line the downtown area, businesses display works by local artists, and art exhibits, openings, and shows fill the events calendar year-round.
- The city's many music festivals and performances feature bluegrass, classical, country, jazz, pop, opera, and just about every other musical genre.
- The Lied Center for Performing Arts, the University Theater and the Spencer Museum of Art are located on the main campus of the University of Kansas.
- The University of Kansas was named as one of the nation's most beautiful campuses in *The Campus as a Work of Art* by architect Thomas Gaine.
- Lawrence is also home to Haskell Indian Nations University, the premier Native American educational institution in the country with students who represent more than 150 tribes.
- In addition, Rand McNally's *Places Rated Almanac* recognized Lawrence as having the most culture per capita in cities in America under 100,000 in population.

"Lawrence, Kansas...The Art of a City...that says it all. Our community is so fortunate to have a vibrant arts scene. Whether the interest is theater, dance, visual, or a spectator...we have it for all ages and interests." Sue Hack, Mayor, City of Lawrence, Kansas.

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Role Summary

The Executive Director serves as the chief executive officer as well as the principal visionary, strategist, advocate and spokesperson for the Lawrence Arts Center. The Executive Director works with the Board of Directors and the staff to develop and implement strategies to offer excellent arts-based programs that fulfill the mission, vision and values of the Lawrence Arts Center. This inspirational leader builds and sustains an organization that nurtures love of the arts through education, exploration and expression.

The Executive Director leads efforts to acquire funds to support healthy growth and to enhance quality of programs at the Lawrence Arts Center. The Executive Director serves as a catalyst to engage, excite and mobilize support among artists, staff and the broader community by developing productive relationships with Arts Center patrons, donors and constituents. The Executive Director is expected to take initiative in implementing a strategic plan in pursuit of the vision developed for the Lawrence Arts Center with the Board and staff.

Background

The Executive Director's background ideally includes a substantive track record of involvement in, support of and commitment to the visual and performing arts. This background ideally includes but is not limited to the broad spectrum of the arts, including exhibition, performance and education. The Executive Director should possess substantial organizational and administrative leadership experience in management, community building and major gift fundraising. This includes management experience with a cross-functional organization and staff, complex budgets, major building facilities, and a broad spectrum of arts-based programs.

Reporting relationship

The Executive Director reports directly to the Board of Directors. Performance is formally evaluated at least annually.

Principal responsibilities:

Strategic plan

The Executive Director inspires the Board and staff in creating, implementing and evaluating strategies to successfully achieve the Arts Center's mission and vision.

Development

In cooperation with the Director of Development, staff and the Board of Directors, leads the development of substantial and diverse income sources, including major gifts, grants, annual campaign and fundraising events. Additionally, he or she develops and cultivates substantial relationships with current and prospective donors at all levels to secure significant contributions to implement the Arts Center's strategic plan.

Advocacy for the Arts and Community Relations

Serves as chief arts advocate and promotes the Arts Center as the focal point for the arts in the community. Serves as a catalyst to forge partnerships among artists, arts and culture organizations, and public agencies.

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Personnel

Leads staff in optimizing operational effectiveness of Lawrence Arts Center. Directs the recruitment, selection, hiring, compensation, training, professional development, discipline and supervision of staff and independent contractors. Motivates staff to meet or exceed established standards.

Operations and Facilities Leadership

Ensures the Lawrence Arts Center develops and implements appropriate policies and procedures to comply with budgetary, safety and legal requirements. The Executive Director ensures that established performance standards are met or exceeded including program quality and budget goals.

Budget

The Executive Director manages an annual operating budget of approximately \$1.5 million (excluding city supported facilities costs).

Qualifications

- College degree required. Master's degree preferred.
- At least five years experience or equivalent in senior leadership position including responsibility for staff supervision, preferably with a nonprofit arts organization.
- Demonstrated success in funding development.
- Proven leadership in developing and managing a complex budget.
- Evidence of effective leadership in optimizing earned income/revenue.
- Effective written and oral communication skills.

Characteristics

- Knowledgeable and passionate about the arts in all its forms.
- Ability to develop meaningful relationships with a wide variety of people.
- Committed to diversity among the Board of Directors, staff, and audiences.
- Ability to inspire and motivate others, especially to work collaboratively in teams.
- Demonstrated ability to effectively build a staff team.
- Individual with strong integrity and character.

About the Lawrence Arts Center

Established in 1974, the Lawrence Arts Center serves as a unifying force in the community of Lawrence, Kansas, drawing people of all ages, neighborhoods, backgrounds and abilities to participate in an ever-growing array of education, exhibition and performance programs. Performing and visual arts programs have steadily grown to an annual participation of 95,000.

"The Lawrence Arts Center is a comfortable place for Kansans of all ages to use their imagination. It is in the diversity of our thoughts that we make true cultural progress in our state and in our world." Kathleen Sebelius, Governor, State of Kansas.

The Lawrence Arts Center's two galleries are continually filled with creative works ranging from those by internationally and locally known professional artists to those by community children. The Arts Education Programs offer an extensive array of classes

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and workshops in drawing, ceramics, painting, printmaking, photography and writing and maintains an artist-in-residence program. Dancers develop skills and have performance opportunities in the Dance Program, and the Arts Center also sponsors the 940 Dance Company--a professional company. Preschoolers develop and learn through their creative experiences in the arts-based preschool. Professional actors share their skills and experiences that engender creativity and confidence in students, grades kindergarten through twelfth, in the Drama Program.

Events and performances are frequently presented by community groups in conjunction with the Arts Center. The Arts Center also publishes *The Arts in Action*, a magazine about its programs.

The Lawrence Arts Center's new home opened in 2002 in the 900 block of New Hampshire Street. The arts-based preschool, serving 150 pre-schoolers, has three classrooms, one of which is outside. The 40,000 square-foot facility also includes two exhibition galleries, a gallery sales shop, a 300-seat theater and ten studios for drama, art, dance, photography, writing and other classes. The Lawrence Arts Center employs sixteen fulltime and eleven part-time staff and approximately eighty contract artists and teachers.